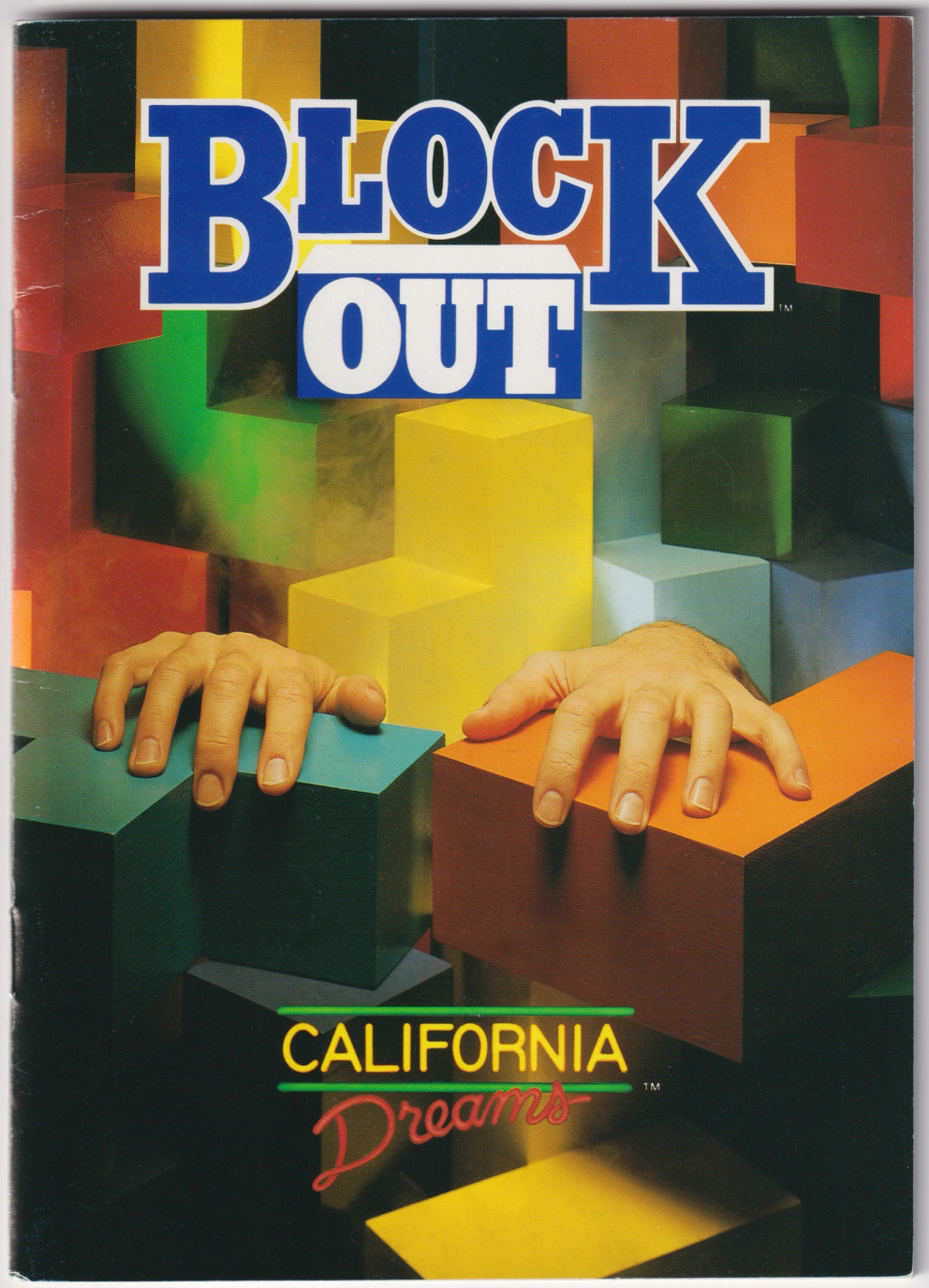
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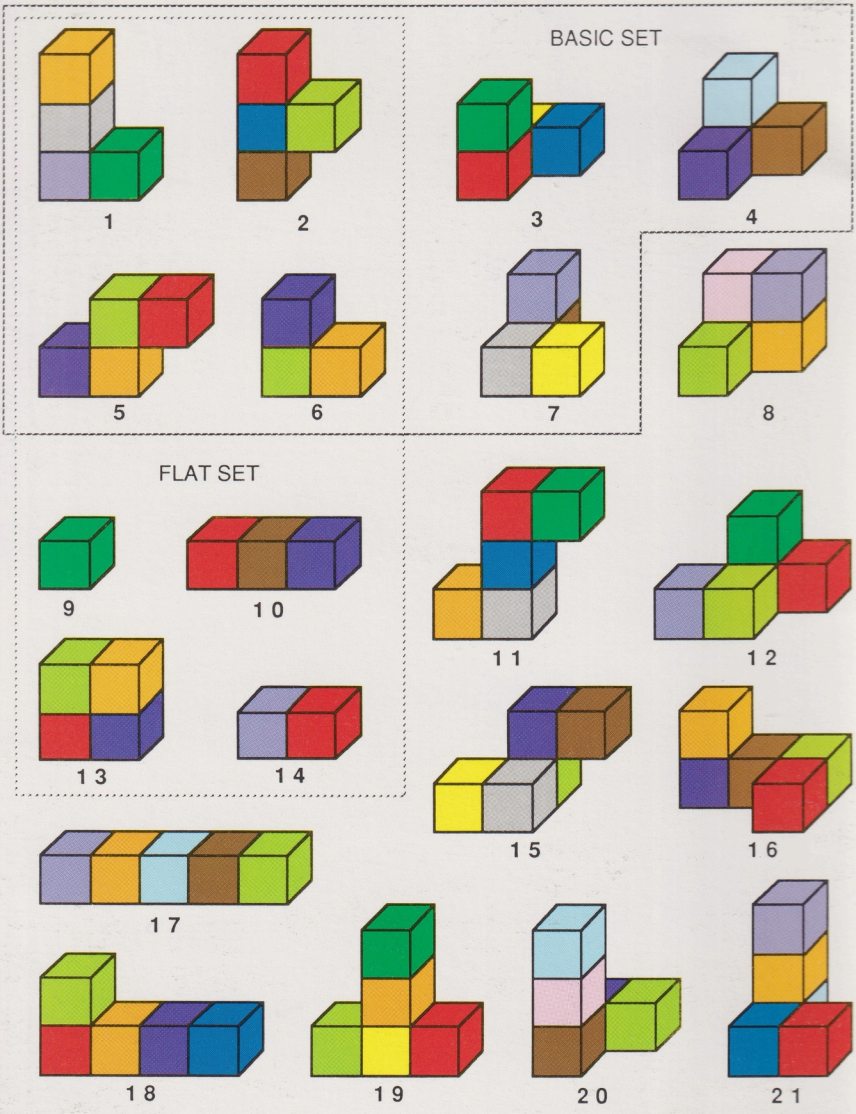

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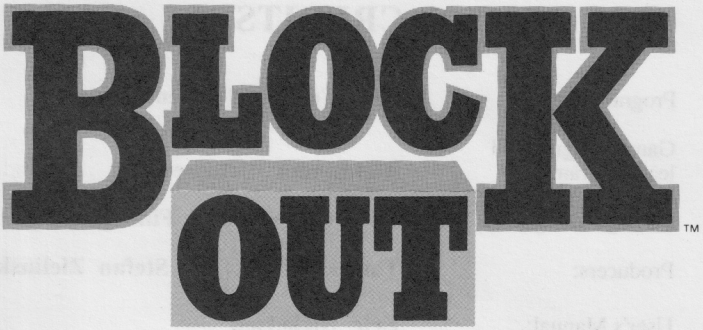

BY

CALIFORNIA Dreams ™

User's Manual

for the Amiga®, Atari® ST™, Macintosh®, Tandy®, and IBM® PC and Compatibles

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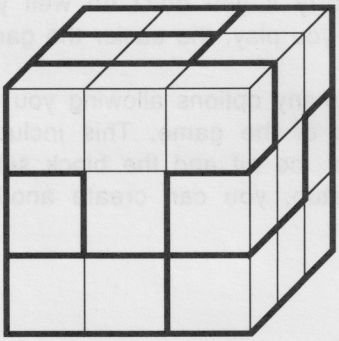
INTRODUCTION

Welcome to BLOCKOUT™, the unique game of three dimensional action and strategy. It is played with a set of 3-D blocks, each composed of 1 to 5 cubes. These blocks appear at the top of a multilayered pit and automatically drop down into the pit. You must flip, rotate, and move them into the proper position in order to completely fill a layer with cubes. When a layer is full, it will disappear, giving you more room to maneuver. The more layers you completely fill, the higher your score will be. Be careful, though: cubes in uncompleted layers will remain at the bottom of the pit, giving you less time and room to maneuver. When the stack of blocks reaches the top of the pit, the game is over. Don't worry if you don't do well your first few games; the more you play, the easier the game becomes.

BLOCKOUT has many options allowing you to modify the different features of the game. This includes changing the dimensions of the pit and the block set used. Once you master a setup, you can create another one with new challenges.

BLOCKOUT, designed by Aleksander Ustaszewski, was inspired by the Soma Cube. The Danish writer and mathematician Piet Hein invented the Soma Cube, basing it on an unusual geometrical theorem. If you combine no more than four cubes into all possible irregular shapes (that is, there is a corner somewhere in the shape), you will end up with seven different shapes, each composed of three or four cubes. (These shapes are the same as the Basic Set inside the front cover.) In turn, these seven shapes, which contain a total of 27 small cubes, can be combined into a larger 3 by 3 by 3 cube, as illustrated below. For a complete description of the Soma Cube, see Martin Gardner's *2nd Scientific American Book of Mathematical Puzzles & Diversions*, published by Simon and Schuster, 1961.



The Soma Cube

GETTING STARTED

Your BLOCKOUT diskette is not copy protected, so before you play the game we strongly recommend that you make a back-up copy of the original diskette or copy its contents onto your hard disk. Then use your back-up copy when loading the game. If you wish to save your high scores, make sure the disk is not write protected.

***Note**: To skip the title screen, press any key or the mouse button (if applicable).*

LOADING THE GAME

Amiga

Turn on your computer system. (Amiga 1000 owners must use the Kickstart™ disk.) When the prompt asking for the Workbench™ disk appears, put the BLOCKOUT diskette into the drive. Your computer will load the game automatically.

Atari ST

Place the BLOCKOUT diskette in the disk drive. Turn on your monitor and the computer. When the desktop appears, double-click on BLOCKOUT.PRG.

Macintosh

Turn your computer using the system diskette or hard disk. Insert the BLOCKOUT diskette into the disk drive and double-click on the BLOCKOUT icon.

IBM PC

Turn on your computer system using your DOS disk. When the DOS prompt appears, insert the BLOCKOUT diskette in drive A. If you are not in drive A, switch to drive A by typing **a:** and pressing **Enter**. Then type:

bl

and press **Enter**. Your computer will load the BLOCKOUT program.

If you wish to install BLOCKOUT on your hard disk, insert the BLOCKOUT diskette in drive A and type the following command at the DOS prompt:

install c:

Replace **c** with the letter designating your hard drive. The game will be copied into a subdirectory called *'blockout'*, created in the current hard disk directory.

You can also copy all files from the original game disk into your hard disk using the DOS *copy* command.

Once the game is loaded, a menu will appear allowing you to select the graphics mode in which you will play

the game. The program will highlight the best available graphics mode that your computer supports, but you may select any mode desired. (Some graphics modes may not work on your computer.) You may select the graphics mode by using the up and down cursor keys and **Enter**, or by pressing the highlighted letter of the desired choice. The graphics mode you select will be saved automatically to a file called *'blockout.set'*. (This file will also contain any current setup saved by the Write Setup option.) The next time you load the game, the graphics mode will be set automatically.

You may bypass the graphics mode menu by typing one of the following commands at the DOS prompt:

bl h	for Hercules mode
bl el	for EGA low resolution mode
bl eh	for EGA high resolution mode
bl c	for CGA mode
bl t	for Tandy mode

After typing the command line, press **Enter**. Your computer will attempt to run BLOCKOUT in the specified graphics mode which will be saved in the *'blockout.set'* file.

COPY PROTECTION

After the program has loaded, it will display a block on the screen. The block will be divided into a number of cubes, and one of these cubes will be highlighted. You will need to locate the same block on the inside front or rear cover of your User's Manual. Once you have located the block, find the color of the cube that is highlighted on the screen.

***Amiga, Atari ST, Macintosh**: use the mouse and mouse button to point and select the proper color.*

***IBM PC:** Select the color on the menu using the cursor keys and press **Enter**.*

If an incorrect color is selected, the BLOCKOUT program will end and return control to the computer's operating system.

There is a chart on the back cover of the manual to help you identify the individual colors.

PLAYING THE GAME

PLAYING FOR THE FIRST TIME

While BLOCKOUT is a relatively simple game, you may need some time to get used to the interface. The easiest way to do this is to follow these steps:

- After successfully loading BLOCKOUT, the program will present you with the Main Menu. Select the Practice Mode option.

- The playing screen will be displayed. Place your left hand on the **Q**, **W**, and **E** keys, and your right hand on the numeric keypad. *If you have a **Macintosh** without the numeric keypad, see the GAME CONTROLS section below.*

- Press the **8** key on the numeric keypad. The block will move up towards the top of the screen.

- Next press the **2** key. The block will move back down towards the bottom of the screen.

- Press the **6** key and the block will move to the right.

- Press the **4** key and the block will move to the left.

- Next try rotating the block. This is done with the left hand, using the **Q**, **W**, and **E** keys.

- Press the **E** key and watch the block rotate. Press the **E** key again and it will rotate in the same direction. Do this a few times to get familiar with the rotation of the block.

- Next experiment with the **Q** and **W** keys in the same fashion. Watch how the block reacts to each keypress.

- Now try dropping the block into place by pressing the **Space bar**.

- Once you have become familiar with the game controls, press the **Esc** key (or equivalent) to exit the Practice Mode.

- You can now try the actual game by selecting the Start Game option.

- You will be presented with another menu that allows you to set the starting level. Press **Enter** or the **0** key to select level 0 (the easiest level).

- The game will begin. Now that you have gained some familiarity with the game controls, you should be well on your way to mastering BLOCKOUT.

GAME CONTROLS

Moving the Blocks

Numeric keypad (All versions)		Keyboard (Macintosh)
1	move down and left	,
2	move down	. or ;
3	move down and right	/
4	move left	**L**
6	move right	'
7	move up and left	**O**
8	move up	**P**
9	move up and right	**[**

***Note**: The mouse (except for the IBM PC) and the cursor keys will also move the block around the pit.*

Rotating the Blocks

Q - Flips the block counter-clockwise (around x axis)
W - Turns the block counter-clockwise (around y axis)
E - Spins the block counter-clockwise (around z axis)

A - Flips the block clockwise (around x axis)
S - Turns the block clockwise (around y axis)
D - Spins the block clockwise (around z axis)

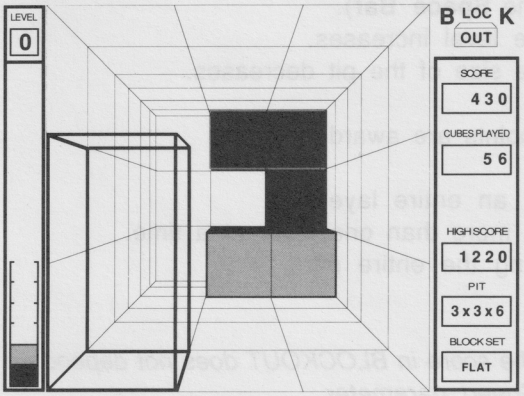
Other Game Controls

	IBM PC	Amiga	Atari ST	Macintosh
Select the highlighted option	**Enter**	**Return**	**Return**	**Return**
Drop the block	**Space**	**--Space or Mouse Button--**		
Turn sound on/off	**O**	*--(see Choose Setup Menu)--*		
Pause/resume the game	**P**	**P**	**P**	**H/Return**
Abort the current game or exit from the menu	**Esc**	**Esc**	**Esc**	**Esc** or **Clear** or **Backspace**

Note: *When you drop a block, there is still a very short moment when you can move the block if there is a room for it in the pit.*

PLAYING SCREEN

The playing screen for BLOCKOUT is divided into three areas: the pit, the layer bar, and game information. In the center of the screen is the pit. This is the area where you will position the blocks. On the left side of the screen is the layer bar. This vertical bar will show the color or shade of each layer of blocks in the pit. On the right side of the screen the game information is displayed: the current score, number of cubes played, and high score, as well as the pit dimensions and block set.



SCORING

There are a total of 11 difficulty levels in BLOCKOUT. You will be able to start the game at any of the first ten levels. After a certain number of cubes has been played, the level will increase, making the game more difficult. In larger pits, you must drop more cubes before the difficulty level changes.

Your score in BLOCKOUT increases:

- With the complexity of both the individual block and the block set.
- With the height from which the block is dropped (using the **Space Bar**).
- As the level increases.
- As the size of the pit decreases.

Bonus points are awarded for:

- Filling an entire layer.
- Filling more than one layer at a time.
- Clearing the entire pit.

***Note**: The score in BLOCKOUT does not depend on the Rotation Speed parameter.*

HALL OF FAME

Once the game is over, press **Enter** (or **Return**). the Hall of Fame will then appear, displaying the ten highest scores. If your score is higher than the lowest score on the list, you will be allowed to enter your name. After typing in your name using the keyboard, press **Enter** to save the new score to disk. Pressing **Enter** without typing a name will also save the score.

If you don't want to save your new score, press the **Esc** key or select the **Cancel** button.

Every setup will have its own Hall of Fame. This will allow you to save the ten highest scores for each combination of pit and block set. The only exceptions are pits with reversed length and width dimensions. For example: a 4 x 5 x 10 pit would have the same Hall of Fame as a 5 x 4 x 10 pit.

MENUS

BLOCKOUT has a system of menus that allows you to alter different features of the game.

***Amiga, Atari ST, Macintosh**: Select a menu option by using the mouse and mouse button, or by pressing the first letter of the option name. If you are in a submenu, pressing the **Esc** key (or equivalent) will return you to the Main Menu.*

***IBM PC**: Selections in the different menus can be made by using the up and down cursor keys and **Enter,** or the first letter of the option you wish to choose. Some selections will contain a colon (:) followed by a value. This value can be changed with the **Enter** key, or with the left and right cursor keys. In a submenu, pressing the **Esc** key will return you to the previous menu.*

MAIN MENU (All Versions)

Start Game - Starts the actual game with the specified setup (*'Flat Fun'* is the default). Upon selecting this option, you will be allowed to set the starting level (0 being the easiest). You can use **Enter**, the up and down cursor keys, the **0** through **9** keys, or the mouse (if applicable) to select the level.

Choose Setup - Selects the Choose Setup menu. This menu allows you to choose from several preselected setups, or change the setup completely.

Write Setup - Saves the current setup to the disk, in a file called *'blockout.set'*. The setup will automatically load the next time you boot the game.

Practice Mode - Starts the practice mode in the current setup. In this mode, the blocks do not automatically descend until the **Space bar** is pressed. The player has unlimited time to move and rotate the block. Press the **Esc** (or equivalent) key to exit the practice mode.

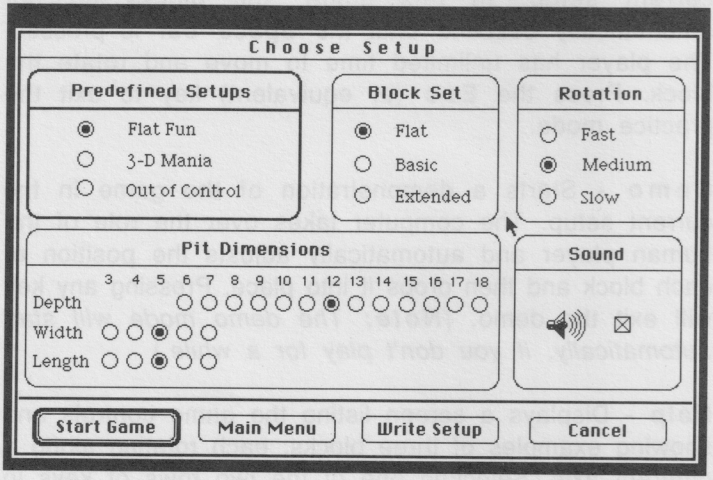
Demo - Starts a demonstration of the game in the current setup. The computer takes over the role of the human player and automatically adjusts the position of each block and then drops it into place. Pressing any key will exit the demo. *(**Note:** The demo mode will start automatically, if you don't play for a while.)*

Help - Displays a screen listing the game controls and showing examples of three blocks, each rotating along a different axis. Selecting one of the two rows of keys in the menu will change the rotation direction.

Quit Game - Exits the game and returns to the operating system.

CHOOSE SETUP MENU
(Amiga, Atari ST, Macintosh)

The Choose Setup menu allows you to alter different features of the game. It contains several windows and buttons. To select an option in a window, click on the selector next to the option name.



Predefined Setups. This window allows you to choose from several preselected setups. Watch how selecting predefined setups changes the parameters in other windows.

Flat Fun - Changes the current setup to *Flat Fun*. This setup was designed with the novice player in mind. Its *Flat* block set and large pit allow for easier play than the more advanced setups.

3-D Mania - Changes the current setup to *3-D Mania*. Designed for advanced players, this setup uses the *Basic* block set with a narrow pit. This is the favorite setup of the developers of the game.

Out of Control - Changes the current setup to *Out of Control*. This setup is quite different than the other two. When using the *Extended* block set, the game becomes a complex logic puzzle.

Block Set. This window allows you to select one of the three block sets. (See the inside front and back cover of the manual for diagrams of the blocks.)

Flat Set - The *Flat* set consists of the two-dimensional blocks (1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, and 14) that are composed of 1 to 4 cubes.

Basic Set - The *Basic* set consists of blocks 1 through 7. They are formed by combining three or four cubes into the irregular shapes. These seven shapes, which contain a total of 27 cubes, can be fitted together to form a larger 3 x 3 x 3 Soma Cube (see INTRODUCTION).

Extended Set - The *Extended* set consists of all block combinations of 1 to 5 cubes (blocks 1 - 41). ***Note**: If the current pit is too small to fit a block from the Extended set, this type of block is not generated.*

Rotation. This window controls the speed of the rotation and transition of the blocks when moving down the pit. The game scoring does not depend on this parameter. Select one of the three speeds: *Fast, Medium*, or *Slow*.

Pit Dimensions. This window allows you to change the depth (6 to 18), width (3 to 7), and length (3 to 7) of the pit. Please note that there is a separate top-ten list for each block set and pit combination.

Sound. This window allows you to turn sound effects off and on.

At the bottom of the Choose Setup window you will find the following buttons: *Start Game, Main Menu, Write Setup*, and *Cancel*.

Start Game - Starts the actual game.

Main Menu - Returns to the Main Menu with the new setup (if you change it).

Write Setup - Saves the current setup to the disk, in a file called *'blockout.set'*. This option is also available in the Main Menu.

Cancel - Returns to the Main Menu without any changes in the game setup.

CHOOSE SETUP MENU (IBM PC)

Flat Fun - Changes the current setup to *Flat Fun*. This setup was designed with the novice player in mind. Its *Flat* block set and large pit allow for easier play than the more advanced setups.

3-D Mania - Changes the current setup to *3-D Mania*. Designed for advanced players, this setup uses the *Basic* block set with a narrow pit. This is the favorite setup of the developers of the game.

Out of Control - Changes the current setup to *Out of Control*. This setup is quite different than the other two. When using the *Extended* block set, the game becomes a complex logic puzzle.

Change Setup - Selects the Change Setup menu, allowing you to change all the aspects of the game setup.

Main Menu - Returns to the Main Menu.

Change Setup Menu (IBM PC)

Pit Dimensions - Selects the Pit Dimensions Menu, allowing you to change the depth, width, and length of the pit.

Block Set - Selects one of the three block sets: *Flat*, *Basic*, or *Extended* (see the inside front and back cover of the manual).

The *Flat* set consists of the two-dimensional blocks (1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, and 14) that are composed of 1 to 4 cubes.

The *Basic* set consists of blocks 1 through 7. They are formed by combining no more than four cubes into the irregular shapes. These seven shapes, which contain a total of 27 cubes, can be fitted together to form a larger 3 x 3 x 3 Soma Cube (see INTRODUCTION).

The *Extended* set consists of all block combinations of 1 to 5 cubes (blocks 1 - 41). ***Note**: If the current pit is too small to fit a block from the Extended set, this type of block is not generated.*

Rotation Speed - Selects one of three speeds: *Slow*, *Medium*, or *Fast*. This option controls the speed of the rotation and transition of the blocks when moving down the pit. The game scoring does not depend on this parameter.

Start Game - Starts the actual game.

Write Setup - Saves the current setup to the disk, in a file called *'blockout.set'*. This option is also available in the Main Menu.

Main Menu - Returns to the Main Menu.

Pit Dimensions Menu (IBM PC)

Length - Changes the length of the pit. You may increase or decrease the length value from 3 to 7.

Width - Changes the width of the pit. You may increase or decrease the width value from 3 to 7.

Depth - Changes the depth of the pit. You may increase or decrease the depth value from 6 to 18.

Exit - Returns to the Change Setup Menu.

HALL OF FAME MENU (All Versions)

Start Game - Starts the actual game. The setup will be the same as the game just played.

Change/Choose Setup - Selects the Change Setup (IBM PC) or Choose Setup menu.

Main Menu - Returns to the Main Menu.

Quit Game - Exits the game and returns to the operating system.

HINTS AND STRATEGY

- Unless you have three hands, use just one set of keys to rotate the block: either **Q**, **W**, and **E**, or **A**, **S**, and **D**, but not both. Place three fingers of your left hand on the **Q**, **W**, and **E** (or **A**, **S**, and **D**) keys. Place your right hand on the numeric keypad. *(If you have a **Macintosh** without the numeric keypad, see the GAME CONTROLS section.)* Try to keep your hands at these locations at all times when playing.

- Becoming familiar with rotating the blocks using the **Q**, **W**, and **E** keys (or **A**, **S**, and **D**) is important to mastering the game. Don't get discouraged if it seems confusing at first.

- If you are having problems playing the game for the first time, watch the computer play in the Demo mode. Then try the Practice Mode to become familiar with the game controls.

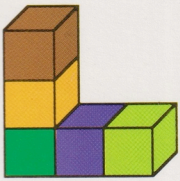
- Sometimes it becomes difficult to tell the exact position of a block within the pit. When this happens, try moving the block against the side of the pit. From there carefully move it into the desired position.

- Remember that the faster you move a block into position and drop it, the more points you will get.

- If you have problems recognizing the overall shape of a block, try rotating it into different positions. By getting several views of the block in different positions, you should get a better idea of its shape.

- If you are trying to achieve the highest score possible, try beginning from a higher starting level.

- You can maneuver the block until it is filled with colors or shades. After you drop a block, there is still a very short moment when you can move the block if there is room for it.



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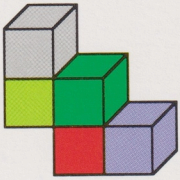

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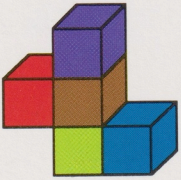

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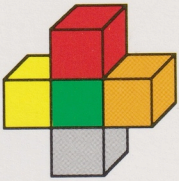

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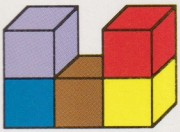

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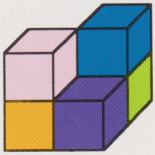

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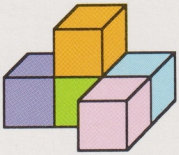

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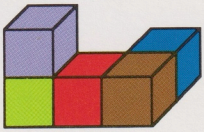

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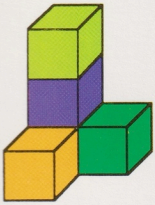

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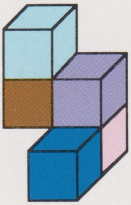

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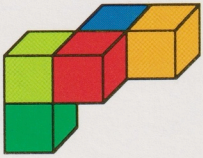

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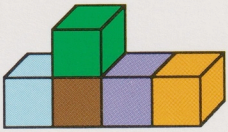

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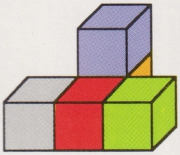

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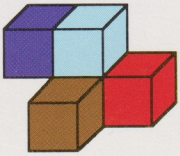

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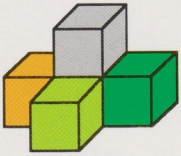

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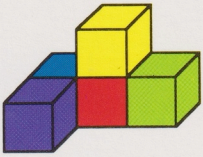

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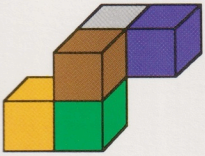

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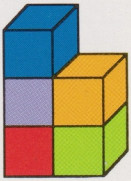

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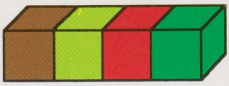

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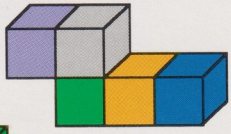

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COLOR KEY

grey

brown

pink

red

orange

yellow

dark green

light green

dark blue

light blue

dark purple

light purple

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